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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turkish, International Reactions to PKK Attacks

All papers report that on Monday, several demonstrations were organized in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and several other provinces across Turkey to denounce PKK attacks. Government Spokesman Cemil Cicek told reporters following Monday's cabinet meeting that the fight against terrorism was a national cause, warning against acts that would harm Turkey's unity. Cicek said that the meetings of Erdogan in Britain, Interior Minister Besir Atalay in Kuwait and Foreign Minister Ali Babacan in Iraq's neighboring countries are aimed at explaining the parliamentary motion's intention. In Britain, Erdogan is expected to meet the British and Israeli prime ministers. Foreign Minister Ali Babacan said Monday during a visit to Kuwait that Turkey would try all diplomatic means before carrying out any military operation.

Turkish televisions quoted President Talabani saying yesterday PKK militants near the Iraqi border will cease all their actions as of yesterday evening. On Monday evening, the PKK announced its conditions for a cease-fire, saying the Turkish army should cease operations in southeast Turkey and that Turkish plans for incursions into northern Iraq should be dropped.

Papers report State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said, "We do not believe unilateral cross-border operations are the best way to address this issue," adding the US had opened a "full-court press" to keep the situation from deteriorating. White House Spokesman Tony Fratto reported President Bush was closely following the developments. "We do not want to see wider military action on the northern border," Fratto said. Gordon Johndroe, Spokesman for the National Security Council, said "The US is committed to working with Turks and Iraqis to deal with the PKK terrorist problem."

Mainstream Sabah criticizes the US for applying a "double standard," recalling that Secretary Rice of the July 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon that she "would not judge the measures taken by Israel," and

that she would "respect the process in which Israel defends itself."
Rice today calls on Turkey for restraint, says Sabah.

President Gul Meets Party Leaders

All papers report President Abdullah Gul held talks with political party leaders to discuss the recent terror actions. Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said after meeting Gul that a "national platform" should be set up to combat terrorism, adding this platform should be comprised of the ruling and opposition parties as well as military and civilians. "A covert war is being conducted against Turkey through the PKK. The cost of failing to act will be heavier than taking action," Baykal emphasized. Far-right MHP leader Devlet Bahceli said Massoud Barzani and his Peshmerge were responsible for terrorist attacks against Turkey, asking that "all Turkish connections to Barzani who are supporting the PKK should be revealed, including those in the parliament." Bahceli said Turkey should not wait for Prime Minister Erdogan's return from meeting President Bush in the US to launch a cross-border operation. The pro-Kurdish DTP chairman Ahmet Turk opposed a cross-border military operation into north of Iraq, saying Turkey should overcome this period "with common sense."

Erdogan on Possible Turkish Iraq Incursion

All papers report that in a phone talk with Secretary Rice before Sunday's terror summit at Presidential Palace, Prime Minister Erdogan urged the US to hand over PKK leaders or launch a joint operation with Turkey to combat the terror organization. Rice warned that a Turkish cross-border operation would harm joint interests and would hurt efforts to block the approval of the controversial Armenian resolution, and asked Turkey to wait for a few days for a joint action against the PKK. Erdogan, visiting Britain as the guest of Prime Minister Gordon Brown, addressed students in Oxford University yesterday, saying Turkey would take

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care of itself if no development is seen in a couple days.

Mainstream Sabah reports while Secretary Rice has asked Turkey to wait for a few days so that the US can convince the Kurdish administration of northern Iraq to move, yesterday Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Undersecretary Ertugrul Apakan told Ambassador Ross Wilson that Turkey cannot wait for a long time without doing anything, stressing the US administration should "supply Turkey with urgent intelligence information in line with the requirements of strategic cooperation."

Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports Erdogan said the Turkish government would consider the political, military and diplomatic aspects of an operation. "We cannot act emotionally, influenced by street protests. We will act consistently. Turkey will pay any price needed to defeat terrorism and will make those responsible for terror pay a price," the PM emphasized.

Editorial Commentary on Possible Turkish Operations into Iraq
From a mainstream daily Milliyet op-ed: "Turkey eventually might find itself using the military option even though it is not the desirable one. The only way of preventing this is to ensure northern Iraq does not become a safe heaven for the PKK. Currently, all PKK command and communication activities function under the sponsorship of Barzani and Talabani. Moreover, PKK terrorist activities are occurring in this area with the US military as an eyewitness. It seems absurd that American intelligence is not capable of discovering the whereabouts of PKK leadership while American journalists are going to Kandil Mountain and interview terrorists. It is also an obvious contradiction that American soldiers sit and watch PKK terrorists in the northern Iraqi mountains while at the same time the US, in cooperation with Turkey, follows and catches terrorists in the Afghan mountains. This is nothing but a clear double standard of 'I can only exert effort to catch my terrorists' mentality. Such an approach does not match US obligations within the NATO Convention. The US stays inactive on the PKK issue in order not to lose northern Iraqi Kurds, i.e. its sole ally in Iraq. However, current events are pushing the US toward a crossroads between Turkey and northern Iraqi Kurds. From now on, it is up to the US to make a choice where to stand."

Murat Yetkin wrote in the liberal-intellectual daily Radikal:
"Secretary Rice asked PM Erdogan to wait for a couple of days. It was learned that she was suggesting a change in the methods to fight against PKK. The new method, if it is implemented, will be a joint operation. Turkey, through its intelligence, will provide target information and the Iraqi army, under US direction, will hit the targeted spots. Turkey decided to use this option to see if it works. If it does not work, Turkey will believe all diplomatic means have been exerted and focus on a military option. Ankara is worried about implementation of such a plan for two reasons: First of all, this will not be a direct US army operation. The US army will provide support for the Iraqi army. The question is that whether Barzani will let the Iraqi army to conduct an operation against the PKK. Washington's decision makers are also worried about this and they are intensively working to eliminate this potential problem. The most recent Rice-Barzani talk was for this purpose. The AKP government, despite growing pressure for action from the man on the street, will likely wait to take any concrete steps until after seeing the results of the November 5 Bush-Erdogan meeting in Washington."

Turks Consider Economic Pressure on Northern Iraq
Sabah, Vatan, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet and Zaman report the Turkish government is considering moves for stepping up economic pressure on the Kurdish administration of northern Iraq by cutting electricity supplies to the region, slowing down procedures at Habur border crossing, and seizing the assets of the Barzani family in Turkey. Nationalist Vatan says around 400 Turkish construction companies operating in northern Iraq were ready to return to Turkey if a call

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comes from the Turkish government.

Turkish General Staff: "No Contact has been established with 8 Soldiers"

All papers: The Turkish General Staff announced on Monday that despite all search activities, no contact has been established with 8 military personnel who are still unaccounted for since Sunday's attack in Hakkari. Pro-PKK web sites claimed the soldiers were taken hostage by PKK.

Constitutional Court President Elected

All papers report that Hasim Kilic was elected as the President of the Constitutional Court yesterday. Kilic is a conservative person and known for his objections in court decisions regarding turban bans and the closure of the Welfare Party (RP) and the Virtue Party (FP). He was elected with the votes of 6 members out of 11. In a press conference yesterday Kilic said "The Court will not compromise on secularism."

TV News:
NTV

Domestic News

- The funerals of 12 Turkish soldiers killed in a PKK raid over the weekend in the border province of Hakkari will be held today.
- The EU ambassadors in Ankara are expected to urge the pro-Kurdish DTP to distance itself from the PKK in a working lunch with the party leader Ahmet Turk today.
- Police have found 45 kg of plastic explosives near a primary school in Silvan township in the mainly Kurdish southeastern city of Diyarbakir.
- Turkey's stocks and currency fell sharply on Monday after a deadly attack by the PKK over the weekend heightened the likelihood that Turkey will launch a cross-border incursion into northern Iraq.

International News

- Italian Foreign Minister Massimo d'Alema has urged Turkey to abstain from extensive operations on Iraqi soil.
- The Kurdish regional administration spokesman Jamal Abdullah said

his government in northern Iraq was against the PKK attacks.

- Muhammad al-Baradei, director general of the IAEA, said Iran will not be a nuclear threat for at least three years since the country is three to eight years away from producing a nuclear bomb.

- Five Orthodox Jews assaulted a woman and an Israeli soldier Sunday for sitting next to each other on a bus bound for Beit Shemesh, near Jerusalem.

WILSON